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2 April 1966

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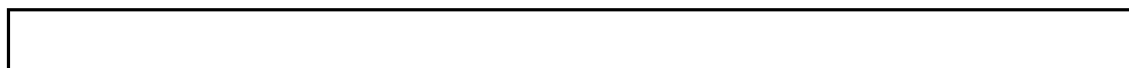
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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C O N T E N T S

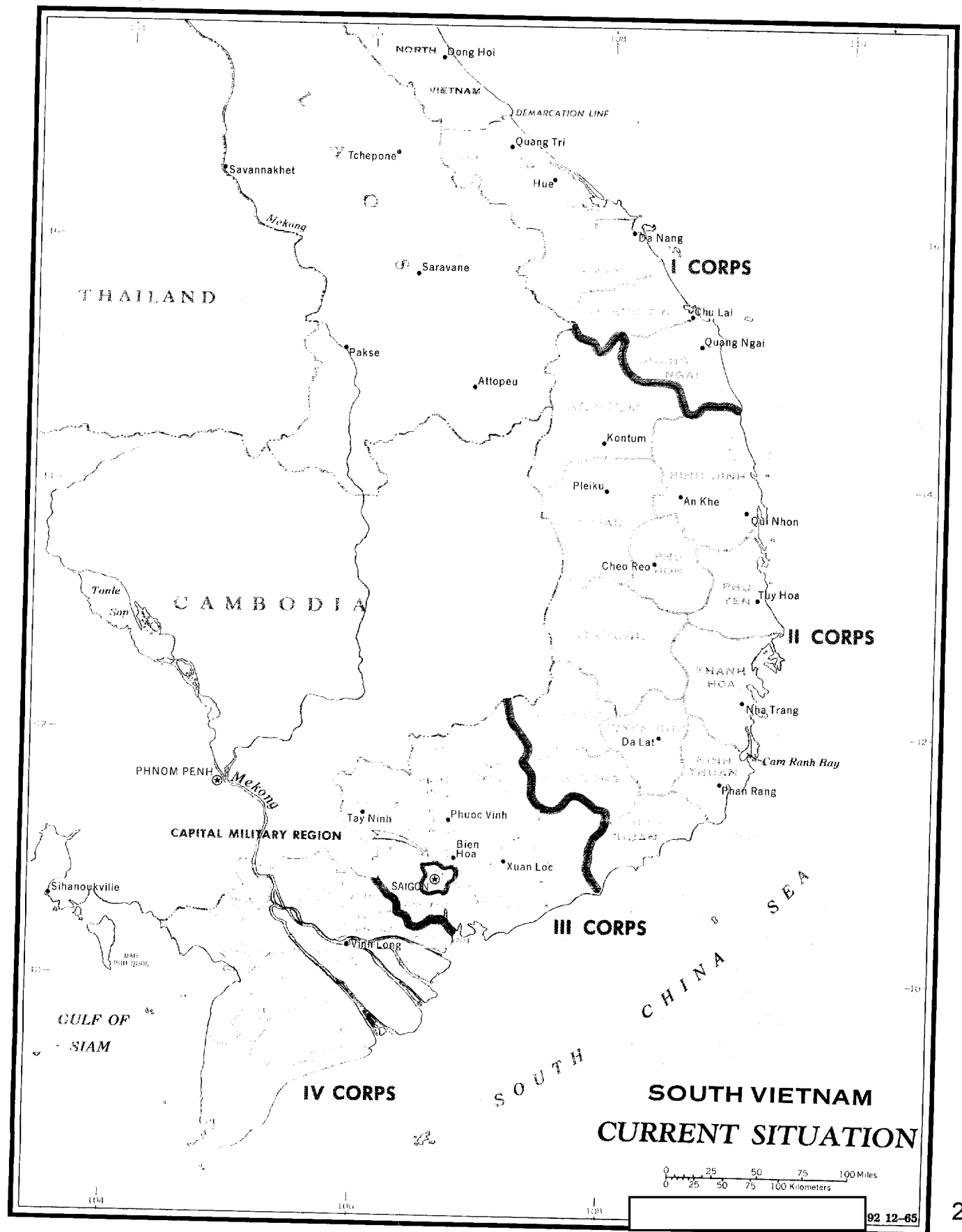
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: The momentum of antigovernment activity continues.

In Da Nang today, some 7,000-10,000 persons, including about 2,000 military, staged a protest march ostensibly honoring a Buddhist martyr. Smaller meetings, criticizing US policy and demanding a return to civilian rule in Vietnam, were reported in both Hue and Saigon.

Directorate Secretary-General Chieu reportedly has been released from custody at General Thi's residence in Hue, where he was taken yesterday after making a carefully worded radiobroadcast which apparently satisfied agitation leaders in the town. [While Chieu's whereabouts is presently unknown, [there are reports that he might be returning to Saigon.]

An effective civil servants' strike in Hue yesterday was scheduled to continue today. In Da Nang, student leaders announced the expiration of their ultimatum to US officials over an incident involving demonstrators and US Marines, thus raising the possibility of action against American installations in the area.

Agitation in various forms was also reported yesterday in eight other provincial capitals in I and II Corps. In addition, the Cao Dai religious-political sect in the delta area added its indictment of the government to those already made by other religious groups.

(continued)

Premier Ky declared in a public speech yesterday that further demonstrations were henceforth illegal, and that he would use force to prevent them. Student leaders in Hue yesterday broadcast a warning to the public that Ky was planning to move marine battalions into the city, [indicating that Ky's contingency plans have become generally known.]

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: There have been no reports of significant military developments in South Vietnam in the past 24 hours.

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Laos: [Sagging morale is threatening to undermine the military posture of the progovernment neutralists in the Plaine des Jarres area.]

[On 30 March a neutralist battalion abandoned its positions near Phou Kout and withdrew west to Muong Soui, where battalion spokesmen, asserting the unit was "battle weary," requested transportation to the neutralist headquarters at Vang Vieng. Key neutralist military and political leaders, although claiming to be distressed by this act of insubordination, quickly acquiesced to the battalion's demands and arranged for evacuation to Vang Vieng.]

[The neutralist commander at Muong Soui, concerned over possible Communist exploitation of the pull-out, has repositioned his remaining units to cover the abandoned positions. Efforts are also under way to send additional neutralist units to shore up Muong Soui's defenses.]

[Although reinforcements may bring the Muong Soui defenses back up to strength, the incident has exposed fundamental weaknesses in both the neutralist leadership and the rank and file, which presage further difficulties in this region.]

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France: The political opposition is taking an increasingly stronger stand against De Gaulle's NATO policies in preparation for the parliamentary session that begins today.

The French Socialist Party, largest party of the democratic left, issued a strong condemnatory communiqué on 30 March directing the Socialist group in the National Assembly to submit a motion of censure. Other non-Communist opposition groups have been preparing for similar parliamentary action.

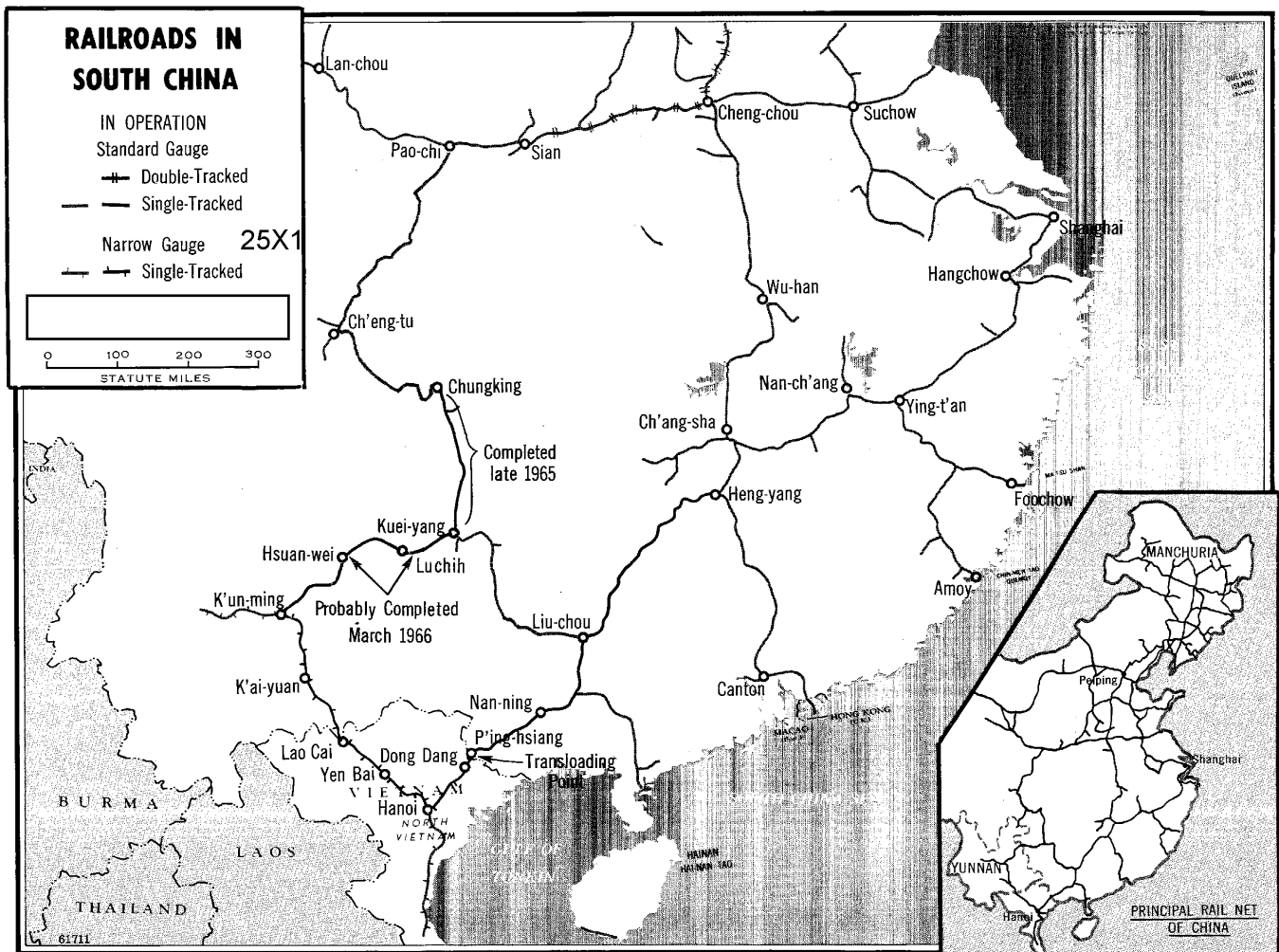
With less than 200 votes in the Assembly, the opposition parties are well aware that they are extremely unlikely to garner the 242 votes necessary to censure the government. They may hope, however, to win away some wavering Gaullist supporters or at least to isolate the Gaullist Union for the New Republic and the Communist Party as De Gaulle's only supporters on this issue.

In addition, the opposition parties probably hope that, by making De Gaulle's moves the subject of prolonged public controversy, they can benefit in the 1967 parliamentary elections. The relatively apathetic public response to opposition efforts thus far to point out the dangers of De Gaulle's course of action, however, indicates it will be a difficult issue to exploit.

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Communist China: [The Kunming-Kueiyang railroad leading to Yunnan Province has apparently been opened to limited traffic.]

[redacted] the first trial run over this new line took place on 11 March, and passenger service will begin on 1 May. [redacted]

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[redacted] more than half the line was in use by November 1965, when work was presumably well advanced on the remaining section from Luchih to Hsuanwei.]

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[The Kunming-Kueiyang line--together with the Kueiyang-Chungking line completed in late 1965--will provide the first rail link between Yunnan and the rest of China's rail network. The new line makes it possible to send goods entirely by rail to Kunming for forwarding by the narrow-gauge railroad between Kunming and Hanoi, and China's capabilities for delivering aid to North Vietnam will thus be enhanced. Furthermore, all supplies destined for Yunnan may now be shipped directly, thereby freeing more of the capacity of the Hengyang-Pinghsiang railroad for support of the Vietnam war.]

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NOTES

Guinea: [Apprehension about the future course of political events is increasingly unnerving Guinean officials. President Touré appears more fearful than ever of an early coup attempt by foreign-supported dissidents. Tension has spread to the resident European and US community as a result of Touré's recent public call for immediate direct action by the populace against all "agents of imperialism" if a coup occurs. There is no hard evidence that a coup is imminent, but Ivory Coast President Houphouet-Boigny now is encouraging the large number of Guinean exiles in his country as part of a psychological campaign against Touré.]

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Ecuador: A delegation headed by leftist Carlos Cueva has gone to Quito to seek the support of students and politicians for demands that the executive be converted into a triumvirate of President Yerovi, Cueva, and another leftist intellectual. The students are no longer demonstrating in the streets, but they still oppose Yerovi and are trying to hold a national assembly next week to coordinate their opposition. One of their demands now appears to be the dissolution of the crack airborne battalion. Yerovi, meanwhile, at his first news conference, said that he hopes to convene a constitutional convention in four or five months and hold elections as soon as possible after that.

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